



13-0020-0010 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

EA-18G Growler Airfield Operations at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island

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Dear Sir or Madam:

Thank you for your interest in the U.S. Navy's *Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)* for the EA-18G Growler Airfield Operations at Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island. The EIS will evaluate the potential environmental effects associated with ongoing and future EA-18G Growler airfield operations at NAS Whidbey Island's Ault Field and Outlying Landing Field (OLF) Coupeville, including the proposed introduction of two additional Growler expeditionary squadrons as well as the addition of Growler aircraft to the training squadron. The scoping period for the EIS was initiated with the publication of the Notice of Intent to prepare the EIS and to announce public scoping meetings in the *Federal Register* on September 5, 2013. During the scoping period, the Navy invites you to submit comments on the scope of analysis and content to be addressed in the EIS. Comments may be submitted during the extended 120-day public comment period between September 5, 2013 and January 3, 2014.

A copy of the scoping materials can be obtained by visiting the project website at <http://www.whidbeyeis.com/>.

There are FOUR ways to provide comments:

1. Fill out a comment sheet and drop it in the comment box at one of the open house public meetings listed below.
2. Provide verbal comments to the stenographer at one of the meetings listed below.
3. Submit your comments through the mail by sending them to:
EA-18G EIS Project Manager
Naval Facilities Engineering Command
(NAVFAC) Atlantic • Attn: Code EV21/SS
6506 Hampton Blvd. • Norfolk, VA 23508
4. Visit the project website at <http://www.whidbeyeis.com/> for further information and to provide written comments.

Open House Scoping Meetings:

December 3, 2013

4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Coupeville High School Commons Area
501 South Main Street
Coupeville, WA 98239

December 5, 2013

4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Anacortes Middle School Cafeteria
2202 M Avenue
Anacortes, WA 98221

December 4, 2013

4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Oak Harbor High School
Student Union Building
1 Wildcat Way
Oak Harbor, WA 98277

Comments must be submitted by January 3, 2014.

13-0030-000



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NAVAL AIR STATION WHIDBEY ISLAND
3730 NORTH CHARLES PORTER AVENUE
OAK HARBOR, WASHINGTON 98278-5000

5090
Ser N00/1627
November 19, 2013

Mr. Kate Kelly
Office Director
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region X
1200 6th Avenue Suite 900
Seattle, WA 98101

Dear Mr. Kelly,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that the Department of the Navy is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for EA-18G Growler airfield operations at Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island. The EIS will be in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act procedures and will evaluate potential environmental effects associated with ongoing and future EA-18G Growler airfield operations at NAS Whidbey Island's Ault Field and Outlying Landing Field Coupeville. The EIS will also include the proposed introduction of two additional EA-18G Growler expeditionary squadrons and the addition of EA-18G Growler aircraft to the Fleet Replacement Squadron.

The Navy will be conducting public scoping meetings on December 3-5 to provide members of the public the opportunity to review project-related information, ask questions of Navy representatives, and submit comments on the scope of analysis and content to be addressed in the EIS. Additional details regarding the EIS and the associated meetings are provided as an enclosure.

The Navy has established a public website at www.whidbeyeis.com which contains up-to-date information on the project and schedule, as well as related documents associated with the EIS. Please check the website for future project updates.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M K N T", is written over the typed name.

M. K. NORTIER
Captain, U.S. Navy
Commanding Officer

Enclosure: Information regarding EA-18G Growler EIS notice of intent





**NAVY PUBLISHES NOTICE OF INTENT
TO PREPARE EIS FOR EA-18G GROWLER AIRFIELD
OPERATIONS AT NAS WHIDBEY ISLAND AND TO
ANNOUNCE PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS**

A Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the *Federal Register* on September 5, 2013, announcing the Navy's intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for EA-18G Growler airfield operations at Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island and to announce public scoping meetings. The EIS will address the potential environmental impacts associated with ongoing and future EA-18G Growler airfield operations at NAS Whidbey Island's Ault Field and Outlying Landing Field (OLF) Coupeville, including the proposed introduction of two additional EA-18G Growler expeditionary squadrons and the addition of EA-18G Growler aircraft to the Fleet Replacement Squadron (FRS).

In 2005 and 2012, the Navy prepared environmental analyses pursuant to the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) for the replacement of the EA-6B Prowler aircraft with the newer EA-18G Growler aircraft at NAS Whidbey Island. The 2005 Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluated the environmental consequences of transitioning fleet squadrons and the FRS from the EA-6B to the EA-18G aircraft, and assumed the disestablishment of the EA-6B expeditionary squadrons. The 2012 EA evaluated the environmental consequences of retaining and transitioning the three expeditionary squadrons currently home based at NAS Whidbey Island from EA-6B to EA-18G aircraft and the relocation of a reserve expeditionary squadron from Joint Base Andrews, Maryland.

To meet current and future mission and training requirements, the Navy proposes to: (1) continue and increase existing VAQ airfield operations at NAS Whidbey Island's Ault Field and OLF Coupeville; (2) add two new expeditionary VAQ squadrons (10 additional aircraft) and augment the VAQ FRS (with three additional aircraft) to support an expanded expeditionary Department of Defense (DoD) mission; (3) construct and renovate facilities at Ault Field over a three-year period to accommodate additional aircraft; and (4) station up to 860 additional personnel at, and relocate approximately 2,150 family members to, NAS Whidbey Island and the surrounding community.

The Navy is holding three open-house scoping meetings to provide members of the public with the opportunity to review project-related information, ask questions of Navy representatives, and submit comments on the scope of the analysis and content to be addressed in the EIS. Each of the meetings will be informal and consist of information stations staffed by Navy representatives. You are invited to arrive at the open-house scoping meetings anytime between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. on one of the following dates and locations:

Tuesday, December 3, 2013
Coupeville, Washington
Coupeville High School Commons Areas
501 South Main Street
Coupeville, WA 98239

Wednesday, December 4, 2013
Oak Harbor, Washington
Oak Harbor High School
Student Union Building
1 Wildcat Way, Oak Harbor, WA 98277

Thursday, December 5, 2013
Anacortes, Washington
Anacortes Middle School Cafeteria
2202 M Avenue
Anacortes, WA 98221

Additional information about the EIS can be found on the project website at: www.whidbeyeis.com. The public website includes up-to-date information on the project and schedule, as well as related documents associated with the EIS.

You may submit written comments to the EA-18G EIS Project Manager, Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Atlantic, Attn: Code EV21/SS, 6506 Hampton Blvd., Norfolk, VA 23508. Written comments may also be submitted online at the project website (www.whidbeyeis.com) on the "Comments" page. Additionally, written and oral comments may be submitted at the scoping meetings. Comments may be submitted anytime during the expanded 120-day public comment period between September 5, 2013, and January 3, 2014.

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